Green Apple Day of Service: Six Project Ideas You Can Do In Under 60 Minutes

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The countdown has begun. One month from now on September 29, the Center for Green Schools at USGBC will host the first annual Green Apple Day of Service, an initiative to have volunteers around the world participate in small acts of service to improve their local school environments. Now that kids are back in school, projects are showing up on the map at a record pace. But one of the things we hear more and more as we get closer to the date is: "I really want to get involved, but I'm worried that there isn't enough time."

Typically, this response comes from your average super-mom, who is making lunch, surfing the Internet, watching the news and texting her husband all at the same time. Not enough time? Moms like this pull off greater undertakings on a daily basis.

So if you fall into that category of super-parent-with-great-intentions-and-not-enough-time, here are six projects that you can do on the Green Apple Day of Service in less than 60 minutes to improve the places where your children learn.

1. **Organize a scavenger hunt** – Gather a few of your children's friends and their parents, and make sure each person arrives on site with a digital camera or equipped phone. Have each team walk around your school grounds and take photographs of things that are good for people and the planet, and things that are harmful to people and the planet. Come back together to share your photos – perhaps even make a collage to present to your child's class or the principal.
2. **Host a coffee talk** – Invite a small gathering of other parents to your house or the local coffee shop to discuss simple ways you can help schools become healthier, safer more efficient places for your kids to learn and play. Download our video beforehand and screen it at the event (it's a crowd pleaser!)
3. **Clean up your schoolyard** – grab some trash bags and have your child invite a few friends to join them in the schoolyard to pick up trash and other pieces of litter. Make it fun by setting it up as a competition to see who can find the most trash or clean up their area the fastest. Have small prizes to give away for a job well done.
4. **Make a video** – have your children be the producers and instruct them make a creative and short video. Be sure that each of your actors holds a green apple and recites the phrase "I learn here and where I learn matters." For examples of other kids doing this, you can watch our video.
5. **Collect supplies** – host a book and school supply drive. Invite parents to bring surplus supplies like extra crayons, barely used notebooks, backpacks or lunch boxes that can be shared with teachers or other families who can put them to good use. What a great form of recycling!
6. **Decorate a recycling bin** – find a large, sturdy old box or container. Set your kids up with some wrapping paper, glue, and if you dare, a little glitter. Help them to make a bold label that explains the materials that can be put in the box to be recycled. Donate it to your child's classroom or the library.

Now that you have project ideas, don't forget to add your event to our map! We need your help in making September 29 as successful as it can possibly be, and every little bit counts. For more information about how you can get involved, please visit mygreenapple.org.

Rachel Gutter
Senior Vice President, Knowledge
U.S. Green Building Council

Member employees, USGBC staff

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